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THE SOLUTION IS REPEAL

By THADDEUS ASHBY

AS I READ ABOUT the hubbub over the Taft-Hartley law — with both Senator Taft and President Eisenhower urging its amendment — my mind goes back to the steel strike of 1949, which I reported for the *Chicago Tribune.*

I had previously lived with the men, working in the Inland Steel mills as a blast furnace electrician, and as one of them I knew more about the innards of the strike than any of the company officials. And I knew it was unpopular with the men and their wives. Within two weeks after it started there was talk in the ranks of a break with the union officials; a back-to-work movement could have been successfully launched.

I was all set to comment on the decision of President Randall (of Inland) to take a strong hand, a stand which, if supported (as seemed likely) would have broken the monopoly of the CIO once and for all. The Bethlehem Steel Company surrendered. It wasn't only the rest of the industry that Bethlehem betrayed — they betrayed their own and all other steelworkers. The men — I am convinced — were fed up with the union; and a corporation perpetuated the union's power over them.

Of the great steel companies to stand up against Roosevelt's blackmail of industry in the Thirties, the one to hold out longest was Republic Steel, under Tom Girdler. When I was choosing a company to work for originally I picked Republic, largely because of my admiration for Tom Girdler and his fight against the CIO. Then a Supreme Court ruling forced him to sign up. He acquiesced.

Yet, even Tom Girdler, conservative stalwart (smeared by pseudo-liberals as an unreconstructed reactionary) felt that he had to give the union a pat on the back. In his autobiography, *Boot Straps,* he sold himself down the river, saying: "After I left college I would have been blind, however, not to see that everywhere in industry working conditions were changing — and improving — because of the union labor movement, essentially an arrangement providing for collective bargaining as against the man-to-man arrangement that was good enough, perhaps, in the days of little business." (p.244)

The very style of this sop was so different from everything I knew of Mr. Girdler, the prose so qualified and uncertain compared to his previous indictment of the CIO, that I could hardly believe Mr. Girdler wrote it. It sounded like something cooked up by a

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pusillanimous public relations man, whose business seemed to be to appease gangsters and keep ruffians quiet.

WELL, LET'S SEE if Mr. Girdler's gratuitous salaam to organized coercion has any validity. I was a dues-paying member in the USA-CIO, and supposedly a beneficiary of the union labor movement described in Mr. Girdler's apostatic paragraph. I know something that neither Mr. Girdler nor his public relations men know: what it's like to belong to the CIO.

In the old days (prior to 1936), a young fellow with some education and a love of open-hearth steelmaking could have risen in a short time to the position of first helper on a furnace, a high paying, highly responsible job. Nowadays seniority decides whether he rises or not. I worked as a third and second helper on a furnace run by an idiot, who kept the tonnage low and once lost a $10,000 "heat" into the cinder pots. Management wanted to get rid of him; we men on his crew would have gladly dropped him into a full ladle; our foreman tried to fire him. It couldn't be done — seniority.

This piece of deadwood was an official in the union. If the foreman bawled him out or tried to punish him with time off, he would answer: "I'll pull the shop!" That threat was an effective brake on any attempt at efficiency. Once I overheard the chief melter talking to the foreman about this man. "The company'd be money ahead", the melter said, "if that fellow would sit on the bench all day and twiddle his thumbs." The foreman snorted: "The company'd be money ahead if he stayed home and they sent him his check!" And yet the contracts were written for the benefit of men like this parasite, men already making high pay (he made $125 a week or more), at the expense of the men with low seniority who had no influence with the union officials who negotiated the rigid status contracts.

There were incidents of coercion on the job: "If ya don't join we'll take ya off this machine and give yer job to a dooz-payin' member." There were incidents that made the union look like a gold-bricker's protective association: "If ya get caught sleepin' on the night turn, we won't let them fire ya." When I showed reluctance to join the union just to see what would happen, I was told that "accidents" happen in the mills. A strong argument.

There was violence within the union. A rival faction was organized; they were what some would call a conservative group. The president they wanted to unseat had been in office for fifteen years. What happened? Their houses were smeared with red lead; emery dust got into their crankcases, sugar in their gas tanks. They wanted honest elections

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without violence; they were "liberals". They were beaten up for the same logical reason and with the same justice that caused the weak socialist deviationists to be shot by Stalin. Power never compromises with reason.

MY PARTICULAR UNION, the United Steelworkers of America, is most conservative. Its officers are good Catholics. Yet it favors generic Communism! Nor could it do otherwise. Its propaganda sheets preach hatred of the capitalists; the only good capitalists are those who give their capital to the men. The vilification of their immediate bosses is replete with slander. If I gave you two handbills, one printed by the PAC and the other by the Communists, you would see that the positions of both on all economic issues are identical.

One morning, a barrage of leaflets fluttered over the mill town, enjoining us all to get ready to go out on strike. I canvassed the men I worked with — not an isolated group but a good cross section — and found that four out of six of them opposed striking. But they weren't allowed to vote on the issue. I had believed, as most people do, that the strength of the union is based on the unanimous support of the men. I found this support to be largely mythical. A tightly organized clique runs the show; the rank-and-file go to the meetings largely because of the free beer served. The chair recognizes the man with the right signal, nobody else. Strike votes are not secret ballots; they are acclamation votes, in which the Nays sound just like the Yeas to the chair. And the hall is full of sergeants at arms, to put out anybody who is drunk, disorderly — or dissentient.

When I went into the mills I honestly assumed that unions must do some good, or they wouldn't have millions of men behind them. Actually, there aren't millions of men behind the unions. Dues aren't voluntarily contributed; they're collected by force through a check-off system which the men hate. Check-off means that dues are withheld by the company from a man's pay check. So, there are millions of dollars behind the unions, not millions of men.

Purge unions of Communism? That's already been done to some extent, with no noticeable effect on their social aims. Their aim is one big union whose president would have more power than the President of the country, for he would have the power of controlling its economy by strikes or strike threats. Purge them of racketeering? But their motto is expediency, moral relativism, anything to obtain their ends.

How do we correct these evils? Not by kowtowing to union leaders and lighting a candle before the principle of collective bargaining, as the great "individualist" Tom Girdler did. If collective bargaining is such a good thing, let's get everybody in on the

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act; let's organize the consumers. If we did, all pay and price increases would be automatic and completely pointless. Union members benefit from collective bargaining only because there is a disparity between their wages and the wages of everybody else.

If collective bargaining were really a good idea, manufacturers should practice it in order to get higher prices for their products. Doctors should organize and collectively bargain for higher fees, druggists charge more for medicine, grocers for groceries, landlords for rent. When everybody refuses to pay everybody else higher prices for their services, then everybody should go out on strike against everybody. Collective bargaining, if widely practiced, would lead to the absolute abolition of all competition.

Look what the so-called conservatives have done. Look how people ostensibly on the side of free enterprise met the evils of unionism. Hollering "there ought to be a law", they supported the Taft-Hartley Act, an unconstitutional law intended to undo the harm of the other unconstitutional law, the Wagner Act. The Taft-Hartley law simply attempts to mitigate the socialism inherent in its predecessor. But, there is no way of containing a "little bit" of socialism; it is a cumulative disease.

The solution of labor's abuse of privilege is to destroy these privileges at the source. The Wagner Act should be repealed. It is silly to argue that, without this support of the government, workers would be paid too little or worked too hard. The only fair price for labor is the market price of labor, what the consumers are willing to pay; and as for working the men too hard, the capitalists never worked labor as hard as the unions are now working the nation.

If Congress withdrew government support of union privileges, the union problem would again be local. Nationwide bargaining would cease, and individual cases could be handled on their merits, without disrupting the national economy.

What really happened under the two labor laws was that the government, presumably in the interests of the "general welfare", took power from both management *and* labor and transferred it to the government. That is always the result of governmental interference in the private affairs of men. Amendment of the Taft-Hartley law can in no way solve the problems of labor or management, nor better the nation's economy; for any change in the law will not eradicate the essential socialism in it, nor in the Wagner Act. There is only one way: wipe out both laws.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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MAR 16 '53

Benson's Battle: In "Agriculture", that building long occupied by Henry Wallace, they are saying: "Benson's fight to go forward to a free economy will be won or lost in the next 100 days — right in these offices."

"They" are the new men around the new Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson. Their references to their own "revolution" possess much the same prophetic rhythm as the words of the New Dealers, back in 1933-4, during the "Roosevelt Revolution".

"They" are the top men — and that fact focuses light on what is perhaps Benson's biggest scrap of all. The Democrats are trying valiantly to exploit the farm issue — the issue of falling farm prices and of supports — and to win the elections of 1954 and 1956. And their front-line shock troopers are some of Benson's own employees, holdovers from the Truman regime in the Department of Agriculture — about 160,000 in all, full and part-time. So, the principal front of Benson's battle is the bureaucracy front.

For instance: in the Production and Marketing Administration (107,000 employees) scattered all over the country, zealots for the *ancien regime* of Roosevelt and Truman are causing much of the uproar; writing and wiring members of Congress, sending bus-loads of rural people to Washington to pester the boys on Capitol Hill, playing hand-in-glove with the noisy Farmers Union, the left-wing of the farm groups.

The Production and Marketing Administration (PMA), was originally designed (say historians of Agriculture) in the early Thirties, by the Harold Ware Communist cell (which included Alger Hiss) in Agriculture, the first cell formed in the Government. The PMA was regarded as a "political machine" for Henry Wallace and later "Baldy" Brannan. It is a very powerful organization.

PMA is interwoven with a whole mass of interests in every county — those who get subsidies or Government money in one form or another. Hooked up with PMA are the "long" speculators, who thought Stevenson would be elected, and who bought up commodities last year, counting on heavy Federal supports to protect them. Stored away in "tanks" is a huge amount of grain, some of it four years old, some of it rotting, much of it no longer marketable for human consumption. An inventory problem (inherited from years of Fair Deal waste) hangs heavy over the whole situation.

"The big money" behind the Democratic vested interests, now hollering to be bailed out, is indeed formidable.

So far, Benson has behind him the regular old-line farm organizations, most of the farm leaders in Congress and the President. The $64 question today is, "Who will win in the first 100 days?"

Flashes from Capitol Hill: On the front of labor legislation — Congressmen warn that employers are foolishly neglecting to prepare their case for comittee hearings, while the labor unions compile extensive, well-documented briefs for their side. Apparently employers are relaxing, on the assumption of "no danger now that Ike is in".

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● In the foreign policy committee rooms. Did Dulles bow to the British after his return from abroad? Has the blockade of China been definitely pigeon-holed? A key member tells us "no": that the Dulles attitude is one of procrastination, not surrender to the British. "It's a feint. Dulles can't afford to telegraph his punches."

● The report (by Senators Wayne Morse and Russell Long) on wastage of Government funds in overseas military bases is biased. The Air Force naturally wants them, wastage or not. But the Navy wants more ships. The admirals calculate that charges of waste will result in a reduction of funds for these bases; and thus the Navy might get more funds for its heart's desire — more and bigger aircraft carriers. (The two Senators are only incidental mouthpieces for the Navy.) A few days later, the Air Force swung back hard at the Navy — by a release of a secret British report adverse to the building of more aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy.

● Patronage. The Ike appointment machine is still jerking and backfiring. Congressmen continue to complain. Even no less a personage than Joe Martin, Speaker of the House of Representatives, growled the other day because the White House had appointed a man from his district to a Federal job — without clearing it with Joe.

Rosenbergs: The masters of the Kremlin — besides their grisly intent that the two atom spies should die as "martyrs" — have worked another base trick, noted here by students of the black art of Communist propaganda. It concerns Judge Irving Kaufman who sentenced the two to death.

The Communists have put into word-of-mouth circulation the story that Judge Kaufman is now resorting to excess severity in order to clear himself of the taint of a former lenient attitude towards subversives. The Commies say the "hanging judge" presided over the first trial of Hiss and showed himself partial to that Soviet agent. Now — so runs the propaganda — the jurist is simply trying to reinstate himself by sending the Rosenbergs to execution.

The story, of course, is a lie, although many innocent people have swallowed it because they do not recall clearly the facts about the first trial of Alger Hiss. It was Judge Samuel Kaufman — not Judge Irving Kaufman — who presided over that trial. Samuel Kaufman drew a lot of criticism for some rulings favorable to the defense of Hiss. The two men are not related. Judge Irving Kaufman has never shown any disposition other than to deal justly and firmly towards subversives.

Dying Controls: Two weeks ago Mr. Eisenhower dropped one of the stupidities of the last Administration, wage and price controls. Last week the new regime showed additional evidence of economic good sense by abandoning in open market the silly fiction (attributed to Henry Morgenthau) that interest, which is the price paid for the use of capital, can be regulated by law. To be sure, Secretary of Treasury Snyder, towards the end of his regime, had really paid the going rate, established by competition, when he was in need of money; but the myth of regulation persisted, and the make-believe was maintained by a juggling of long-term and short-term paper, with varying interest rates. Mr. Eisenhower's Secretary of the Treasury dropped the farce completely last week by going into the money market and paying the prevailing price.

Nearly nine billion dollars' worth of one-year certificates came due on the 15th of February, last Sunday. They bore an interest rate of 1⅞ per cent. Over eight billion dollars' worth of new one-year certificates, bearing 2¼ per cent were offered in exchange, and because the rate was slightly above the market, the whole issue was taken up. And the market absorbed $620 million in six-year bonds carrying a 2½ per cent return.

It is too early to say that controlled economy schemes are to be abandoned completely. But in its first experience with the public debt, as well as in its dropping of price and wage controls, the new regime did replace the Roosevelt-Truman gobbledygook with sound economics.

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Repudiating Yalta: When Ike called for repudiating secret treaties, he truly "started something". In the past 48 hours, the more thoughtful observers in this town have been talking about a startling proposal by Senator Ferguson. The Michigan Senator has called for a Senate inquiry into all secret foreign agreements negotiated by prior administrations — to pave the way for repudiating those that go against "American principles". This is in line with a White House statement that Ike in his speech had in mind a review of "any and all secret agreements of the past 20 years".

Since Ferguson is now a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is reported that that body (now strongly influenced by Taft, also a new member) will authorize such an inquiry. Historical scholars, anxious for "revision" of the Roosevelt-Truman myths of foreign policy, like this development. They point out that the present revision of our foreign policy (*vide* the release of the 7th Fleet) should be accompanied by an illuminating revision of the official version of the blunders of the last two administrations.

One course of inquiry especially desired is an examination of the Teheran conference of 1943. This meeting, they believe, was fundamentally of far more importance than the Yalta meeting — so widely decried. The latter conference, held in February, 1945, implemented the basic policy laid down at Teheran. It was at the first conference, in the Iranian capital, that Stalin flattered Roosevelt and got him to agree to the basic policies of "selling out" Poland (and perhaps China too).

Other lines of inquiry might well prove fruitful. One is the examination of records to find out just why the biggest failure of American foreign policy occurred — the failure of Roosevelt to collaborate with the German underground in its plans to overthrow the Hitler regime in 1944. Mr. Allen Dulles — the new head of the Central Intelligence Agency — could supply much information for such a probe. Dulles (brother of the Secretary of State) served as a "hush-hush" agent in Switzerland during the war and vainly sought to get F.D.R. to help the German plotters against Hitler. He related the story in a remarkably frank and courageous book, *Germany's Underground*, published in 1947 (Macmillan).

The line of inquiry, it is suggested, might pursue this subject further. It would be important to ascertain the truth of some private rumors that have been circulating in the Capital for years. According to these reports, the entourage of F.D.R. not only prevented collaboration with anti-Hitlerite Germans, but even went so far as to disclose the names of anti-Hitler underground leaders to the Gestapo, with the result that the latter were captured and executed (action which was not displeasing to the Soviet Government).

Names! Names! Names! You know at least two people — maybe twenty — who ought to be reading HUMAN EVENTS. Please send us their names and addresses, so that we can tell them about this publication.

Relief Rolls: Editors of all four Washington daily newspapers on February 13 told the District of Columbia Citizens Advisory Council that relief rolls should be open either directly to the public or through the commissioners (who rule the Federal District). Frank C. Waldrop, executive editor of the *Times-Herald* declared that secret handling of public funds was contrary to good public policy. John O'Rourke, Editor of the *News*, said that the facts do not bear out the fear of welfare workers that needy persons will be humiliated or exploited by publication. The Washington Council, after hearing the editors, proposed that the District Commission assume the responsibility for opening relief rolls and opposed a pending proposal which would make it a crime to reveal the contents of relief rolls.

The above story is but one straw in a wind blowing hard throughout the country ever since Senator Jenner won his battle in October, 1951, for state autonomy in the matter of disclosure of such rolls. He succeeded in tacking an amendment onto a tax bill; this rider struck out Federal provisions under which

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relief funds could be withheld from states requiring disclosure of relief rolls. Indiana, Jenner's state, had acted to require public inspection and thereby brought down on its head the wrath of Oscar Ewing, Federal Security Administrator at that time.

The state of Indiana stuck to its guns; and there have been many other evidences of similar independence in numerous states throughout the Union. Various newspapers deserve praise for investigating the operation of this system of open relief rolls, and the consensus has been that no abuses of the practice have appeared. On the other hand, the development is believed to have reduced sharply the number of cases of fraudulent relief.

Books for the Blind: No one can say that the "liberals" are not thorough — especially after looking through the catalogs of Braille books provided by the Library of Congress (compiled by the Division for the Blind). We find such names as Lattimore, Adamic, Edgar Snow, Howard Fast, Raymond Swing, Thomas Mann, Henry A. Wallace, Harold J. Laski, Harlow Shapley, Elmer Davis, Steffanson, Vera Micheles Dean, William E. Shirer, etc., etc. But there are no entries for Henry Hazlitt, George Sokolsky, Charles C. Tansill, Freda Utley. One striking example — there are quite a number of books available for the blind on the subject of the Far East from the pen of Professor Owen Lattimore, but no copy of *The China Story* by Freda Utley. In the case of the Talking Books for the Blind (also handled by the Library of Congress), there is Richard Lauterback's *These Are The Russians*, but not William L. White's classic *Report on the Russians*. Lauterback could scarcely be classified as a severe critic of the Soviet Union — White was pilloried by "liberals" for his frankness in disclosing the tyranny of the Soviet Government. And so on.

These books are made available without charge to adult blind residents of the United States and may be borrowed through 26 distributing libraries serving as regional centers. They are authorized by an act of Congress of 1931.

It is little wonder, in view of the above situation, that there are plans being made on Capitol Hill for an investigation of the Library of Congress. After the terms in office of Librarians Archibald McLeish and Luther Evans (both "liberals"), legislators deem it time to find out just what has been going on in the largest library of the country.

Soviet Anti-Semitism: There has arisen a good deal of confusion as to whether the new Soviet Government's "anti-semitism" is really such, or only "anti-Zionism". Some pieces of Soviet propaganda seem to confirm the latter view. Yet many think that there is no doubt that the intent is "anti-Jewish", which term conveys more precisely what is usually meant by "anti-semitism".

The weekly *Truth* (London) comments: "It is significant that the *Times* preferred the headline: 'Jews Accused of Plot to Kill Soviet Leaders'. On the face of it, there might seem to be nothing of profound importance in the racial composition — Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian or Jewish — of the accused doctors. The instinct of the *Times*, nevertheless, was sound. The naming of the doctors as Jews was the major news interest of the event. Thousands of Jews perished in the earlier purges, but as Trotskyites, Bukharinists, Mensheviks — never as Jews. The Kremlin could scarcely have failed to be aware that, in the result, the particular stir caused in the rest of the world was because the Jewishness of the defendants had been stressed."

But *Truth* adds a note of warning: "Jews are right, beyond doubt, to protest, and to persuade others to protest, against trials of their kinsmen which are a degradation of the human spirit. The vileness, however, does not consist in the fact that the accused in the dock are Jews — which is very much what the agitation would suggest — but in that they are sentient beings. That is a matter which we should all bear in mind."

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